

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 10, 2012

Briggs Building, 845 Park Avenue

Reed Conference Room

MINUTES

The third meeting of the Cranston School Committee (Sub-committee) for All-Day Kindergarten was held on the above date at 5:00 p.m. Members present were: Janice Ruggieri, Michele Simpson, Stephanie DiChiro, Gail Jeschke, Joseph Balducci, Joel Zisseron, Amy Merlino, Mary Ellen Russell, and James Zanfini.

Mrs. Ruggieri announced that she will have to leave by 6:00 p.m. due to an open house at the Cranston Area Career and Technical Center.

Mrs. Ruggieri addressed the committee noting that we would begin by discussing items from the last meeting, i.e., moving forward with the curriculum as well as trying to contact some of the districts that we knew were also looking at or have already done All Day K. Mrs. Ruggieri reported that she did not have much luck in getting other districts to speak to her on this matter. Mr. Zanfini reported that he, also, did not make any progress with it noting that during the second week of December, he tried calling and they would not give him any information.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that she and Mr. Zanfini would sit down and try to think of another approach to get this information. She suggested that maybe we could invite some of the other districts to a meeting.

Mrs. Ruggieri reported that Mr. Balducci had gotten back to her through e-mail giving her figures that showed what a full program would look like with salaries and transportation, etc. Also discussed was the supply account and teacher assistant account.

At this time, Mrs. Ruggieri asked for the updates from the different people who were given items to look into.

Mrs. Jeschke reported the following regarding the curriculum portion: They met last Wednesday. When they approached their tasks of applying the State's Common Core Standards to Cranston's current Kindergarten curriculum, we realized it was a possible task but also a very time consuming one that could not be accomplished during their two hour meeting. The Cranston Kindergarten curriculum was completed and adopted in the year 2000. The K Curriculum Committee that developed and wrote the curriculum met over a period of two years to produce it. It's an all-encompassing document.

Although it's the year 2012, years ago after our review to see if the State's Common Core Standards could be applied, we realized that it's still an excellent and essential basis for a quality early childhood education. That's never dated. The report card, on the other hand is

another issue. The daily schedule sample; the classroom set up by centers and other professional development information, took into account the development of 5 and 6 year old children: actually even 4 year old children. That's still essential to a quality kindergarten whether it's a ½ time program or an all-day kindergarten. It's essential for new Kindergarten teachers to have access to it too. In reviewing the common core standards and language arts in math, these can be matched to coincide with the K curriculum but this would require a significant amount of time by a kindergarten curriculum committee. The final document would have the common core standards mapped into the K curriculum. Before that would be started, a few questions that came to mind that they thought would need to be answered because it's so encompassing are:

1. Where are we going with the All-Day Kindergarten? Is it an idea that we're investigating it or is it the true possibility that it could be piloted in September. If that was the case, then you would really need to start doing that mapping right now to even have something to go on.
2. The final document would have to have both the State Common Core Standards and the K curriculum but it would take time.

Michele Simpson asked wondering about the time it takes for that; with the Race-to-the Top money, she wonders if they could get some funding from that because that funding for early childhood can only be used for training and things like that. She was wondering if they could core that in. She noted that she would look into this. So far

all of her involvement has been with pre-school. She also spoke on an entrance exam and is that what they are going to use as a base line.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that it is an important step to know that we're current and to move on from that. The ultimate goal from this is to have a Pilot. It is not reasonable to say it would happen in September. Logically we would like to move with this and move in increments so we would at least have a chance at being successful. She would rather say that we're going to try it with a Pilot and then we'll move from that direction. She noted that we need to start now with a curriculum committee to give ourselves some time to do it. If we could get some funding, which Mrs. Simpson will be looking into, then that would be something that we could process. Also discussed was the Race to the Top money and programs regarding the procedures to pass to go into kindergarten. The Commissioner is looking at outreach screening to do an entrance exam. Her purpose is so that everybody will be ready to be in kindergarten. The money is going to go to revamping the current standards that we have now.

Mr. Zisseron reported that the biggest obstacle is where you are going to put these students. Before you even move forward, you have to decide where you're going to come up with roughly 20 classrooms; however, if you want to start a pilot, his initial reaction after investigating, is to use Edgewood Highland because there are a couple of rooms there. We can take kids (anything over 25) from

Barrows, maybe Rhodes, Dutemple, Eden Park and maybe Waterman up in this area to start the Pilot. He noted that right now the elementary population is holding; we're not going to all of a sudden in the next few years, find a big gap of classrooms as we did a number of years ago. A pilot is a good way to go but then once you've done the pilot, what is going to be the next step.

Mrs. Ruggieri spoke on building usage; empty buildings that we know of in the City. For that step we come into a different issue. Mr. Zisseron noted that's a different issue. If you want to house them under one roof, you will need a building roughly 35 – 40 thousand square feet. A Kindergarten room has to be at least 1300-1500 square feet because of all the teaching stations, etc.

Mr. Zisseron reiterated that if they are going to go with a Pilot, they will not be ready by September 2012. The goal should be that the year after that, the pilot could be at Edgewood, only because their numbers look good. There's a private organization in there that we can re-locate. He noted that it is very difficult to find room; then if you do pilot in 2013-2014, what are we going to do in 2014-2015? You have to be prepared to either be in the market for a building; you need renovations that will cost roughly \$250 per square foot for the renovation; you're going to need furniture, supplies, and materials. To recommend a pilot will give us a year to have a plan going in or it's not going to work. A lot of parents are going to want All-day K. It's going to save them a lot of money in Day Care.

Mrs. Ruggieri added that some people will want all day K; however, some people will still want that option of the ½ day. Mrs. Simpson added that statistically it would be 85%-90% who would want all day K. A discussion ensued regarding how the students would be chosen for an all day K.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that, in addressing this information, she and Ms. Iannazzi spoke about floating a bond and what they might be able to get from the State. They would have to sit down and talk with the Mayor and see if he is willing to explore options with us.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that she is going along with Mr. Zisseron's recommendation of the cluster. A discussion ensued on where the pilot would be for the first year and the plan to be put in place for the second year. Mr. Zisseron noted that he prefers cluster because parents get insecure when their child is being taken a long distance to another school, which is understandable.

A discussion ensued in regards to HUB schools on each side of the City. Mr. Zisseron noted that it would be very helpful to cluster to three places across the City. It will fit better with the parents and the cost of the busing will be a little less.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that she and Ms. Iannazzi will look into the City Bonds. Mrs. Jeschke will continue to work on the curriculum piece.

Mr. Zanfini and Mrs. Ruggieri will work on getting feedback from other communities. Mrs. Ruggieri is going to go with Mr. Zisseron's recommendation regarding space and transportation and we'll work off of that.

Mr. Zisseron reported that for the next meeting he is going to try to set up Edgewood; what the numbers would look like or have an idea of what Edgewood would look like, as an example. He noted that he may be able to figure out roughly the busing for this also. Mrs. Ruggieri asked him to get with Mr. Balducci so that he can have figures for that ready; and maybe even if they have an idea of the cost to do renovations if necessary on the building. Mr. Zisseron noted that some of this information he can do in-house.

Also discussed was the following:

- Two head start rooms**
- Edgewood's ESL Kindergarten which can't be moved to Gladstone because they already have two ESL K's.**
- Enrollment of Kindergarten children in the different schools**
- The process of choosing children for the all-day kindergarten pilot**
- Mr. Zisseron will use this years' numbers and see how it falls (with special ed children)**
- The Sprague Building**
- The importance of Public Relations under a 3 – 5 year plan**
- Using the work "Zone" for different areas of the city**
- Have to present it as a formulated plan and why we are doing it this**

particular way and the steps following

- **The idea is to be able to present something as a plan to the public and what it will include**
- **Teacher certification is specialized**
- **Tying this in with Title money**
- **The staffing issue**
- **Making sure that all of the Kindergarten teachers have “Curriculum Binders”**
- **Mrs. Simpson to notify elementary principals to check with Kindergarten teachers about the “Curriculum Binders”**

Giving more time to prepare for the next meeting, it was scheduled for Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. here in the Conference Room of the Briggs Building.

There being no further business to come before this sub-committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Leone

Recording Secretary